

"GET COAL" CONVENTION INSISTS ON PROMPT ACTION

Senator Mason Declares if the Law Does Not Interpose for the People's Protection
There Will Be Violence—Ex-Congressman Tarsney Asserts Existing Statutes
Are Ample if Executive Officers Choose to Act.

The climax of the meeting of the "get coal" convention at the Shoreham Hotel was reached this morning when, in a burst of eloquence and with dramatic emphasis, Representative John Wesley Gaines of Tennessee exclaimed that it was not inadequacy of the laws, but the inactivity of those entrusted with their enforcement, which was responsible for the suffering incident to the coal famine.

"If this inactivity continues," he declared, "the Attorney General of the United States and others will be but inviting impeachment, and I for one will support such action by the House of Representatives."

Washington's People Blamed.

When the meeting was called to order by Mayor Maybury, of Detroit, he reviewed the work that had been undertaken by the convention which met in Detroit last October, and the conditions which had led to the present call. He then introduced Senator W. E. Mason, who presided.

In his opening remarks Senator Mason reproved the people of Washington for failing to prepare actively for the coming convention, and at this point Barry Bulkley, secretary of the Business Men's Association, interrupted to say the trouble was everybody's fault and the authority to act, in view of the failure of the District Commissioners to appoint delegates. He said that those present were there because of their interest in the matter, and actually had no legal standing.

Senator Mason then made an earnest appeal to the convention to exert all its influence in a petition to Congress to apply to coal the same doctrine that was now applied to bread and water.

Have Ample Power.

"The right of municipalities to fix cab rates is unquestioned," Senator Mason continued, "so are the restrictions upon bakers as to the weight of their bread; the control of water and gas companies is recognized as a matter of course, and yet the authorities hesitate while the people freeze."

"In my bill I have offered a peaceful way for the relief of the coal famine. If the Government does not act the people will. Prosperity has caused the mine operators and the railroads to develop pigstickerism."

O. G. Staples, on behalf of the District, told of the efforts of the local commercial bodies, of the city government and of the committee of the United States Senate.

Timothy E. Tarsney, corporation counsel of Detroit, and former Representative in Congress, was then introduced. He told of the three methods induced by the Detroit convention, calling upon the Attorney General of the United States to enforce the act of July 2, 1900, known as the Interstate Commerce act, to prosecute under the Sherman anti-trust act, and to institute criminal proceedings against the violators of these measures which, under the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States, are amply broad to meet the emergency.

"Both laws seem broad, comprehensive, plain, and clear," he continued. "Has there been any conspiracy or agreement concerning the price of coal? Is there any monopoly of the coal produced in this country? If so, the remedy is in the courts. Is the business of the coal companies and the railroad companies interstate business? If not, the Federal courts have no jurisdiction. If so, it is the duty of the Attorney General and his subordinates to proceed at once."

Mr. Tarsney also read a letter from ex-Senator George F. Edmunds, former chairman of the Judiciary Committee, in which the venerable ex-Senator declared that "the only difficulty is in want of administration."

Committee on Resolutions.

The character of the convention may be estimated from the personnel of the committee on resolutions, which is to report this evening at 6:30 o'clock, and is made up of the following:

Timothy E. Tarsney, Michigan, chairman; Hon. William E. Mason, Illinois; James M. Robinson, Indiana; George F. Evers, Iowa; Hon. J. C. S. Blackburn, Kentucky; Walter C. Emerson, Massachusetts; Charles S. Ashley, George Grimes, Massachusetts; Hon. J. T. Lloyd, Missouri; Cuyard C. Ride, New Hampshire; William J. Reed, New Jersey; Major A. W. Edwards, North Dakota; Byron W. Holt, Ohio; R. S. Person, South Dakota; Hon. J. W. Gaines, Tennessee; Hon. S. B. Elkins, West Virginia; Rev. Robert R. Condon, Wisconsin; Barry Bulkley, District of Columbia.

GERMANY HESITATES OVER VENEZUELAN PEACE OVERTURES

Situation Still One of Grave Uncertainty.

ALLIES DESIRE MORE TIME

Venezuela's Guarantee Questioned—May Be Merely to Permit Discussion of Blockade Proposition.

Just at the moment when the ending of the acute phase of the Venezuelan trouble appeared assured, new difficulties have been raised—or rather the possibility of their appearance has been suggested—that will tend to postpone final action, and cause a continuance of the uncertainty which is believed to be full of danger to the peace of more than one nation.

The advice received here yesterday that the British and Italian governments were favorable to the acceptance of Minister Bowen's proposals for raising the blockade were believed to be the immediate forerunner of the announcement that the three allies had formally consented to make this exceedingly important concession. It was supposed that the German government would be unable to resist the importunities of her partners in the Venezuelan concert to join them in ending the dangerous situation which will exist as long as the squadrons of European nations invest the Venezuelan coast.

Germany, however, according to the official information made known here this morning, has not accepted Mr. Bowen's proposal even in principle, and there is now no telling when a unanimous agreement will be reached. If it is reached at all, on the blockade proposition.

Question Venezuela's Guarantee.

The new difficulty that has arisen concerns the ability of Venezuela to carry out the promise of Mr. Bowen to guarantee payment of the foreign claims through a pledge of the Venezuelan customs. The allied powers have raised the point that Venezuela may not be able, on account of having given France, for example, a prior lien on her customs, to fulfill the pledge and thus assure payment to them. Mr. Bowen has made a positive statement that the prior guarantees will not interfere in any way with the success of his pledge in behalf of Venezuela.

There is a suspicion here that none of the powers is really concerned over this phase of the matter, but that the question has been raised more to gain time while the governments of England, Germany and Italy are trying to reach an agreement on the blockade proposition.

Conferences With Mr. Bowen.

Sir Michael Herbert, the British ambassador, called on Mr. Bowen this morning and had a long conference with him. Sir Michael appeared also in behalf of Count Quadt, the German charge d'affaires. He was apparently very favorably inclined toward the acceptance by the allies of Mr. Bowen's blockade-raising proposal, but had no authority to say that any one nation of the three was more willing than the others to meet the wishes of the Venezuelan plenipotentiary.

Mr. Pulido, the Venezuelan charge d'affaires, was at the Arlington, where Mr. Bowen is stopping, while Sir Michael was visiting the latter, but did not go to Mr. Bowen's apartment, while the British representative was there, as during the severance of the diplomatic relations of Venezuela and the European allies no representative of the South American government is permitted to recognize, personally or officially, a representative of England, Germany or Italy, who is bound also to this same rule with regard to persons in the employ of Venezuela.

DOBLIN'S CHARGE OF COLLUSION LESSLER PROTESTS IS FALSE

QUAY LOSING GRIP ON STATEHOOD WHIP

Combination Which Favored Admission of Territories Said to Be Disintegrating.

The President of the Senate must decide whether Senator Quay has the right to hold the floor in the morning hour at the conclusion of the morning routine business.

The Senator attempted to take the floor at 12:40 today for a discussion of the omnibus Statehood bill. He was opposed by Senator Aldrich under the claim that rule 7 of the Senate made it necessary for him to obtain unanimous consent.

President pro tempore Frye announced that he would be pleased to hear Senator Aldrich on the subject, when Senator Quay withdrew his motion in order to permit Senator Scott to deliver a speech on his joint resolution proposing a change in the present pension laws.

Nevertheless the question will come up again tomorrow, when it must be decided. It is important, inasmuch as it will decide whether the discussion of the Statehood bill will preclude the passage of all other matters.

Senator Burnham today resumed his speech in opposition to the Statehood bill.

It is the program of the opponents of the measure for Senator Lodge to follow, with Senator Bard next on the rostrum. Senator Kean also has a speech prepared antagonistic to the bill.

Word was passed this morning that the day had arrived for Senator Quay to make his attempt to force a night session. It was learned that Senator Quay had sent notice for all Statehood Senators to be here today.

Senator Beveridge is quoted as saying that if this action is taken the other side would be ready to proceed.

Emphatic denial has been made by the Democrats to the charge that disintegration is beginning in the combination favoring the admission of Arizona and New Mexico. The charge, however, has not been made by the members of the Committee on Territories having charge of the bill, and therefore the defense is generally regarded as unfavorable sign amounting almost to a contrary admission. It is now believed more firmly than before that Senator Quay is experiencing difficulty in holding his votes.

Contradicts the Retraction Made Before the House Committee on Naval Affairs Yesterday—Gives His Version of Association With Witness.

Did See Speaker to Ask to Be Saved From Notoriety. Telegram Urged Secrecy Because Matter Had Been Considered in Executive Session.

When the investigation of the Lessler bribery charges was resumed today before the House Committee on Naval Affairs, Representative Lessler asked to be heard to make a statement before any further testimony should be taken.

Lessler was not sworn again. He made a statement denying the testimony of Doblin yesterday; also statements made by McCullagh and Quigg as to his (Lessler's) alleged reflection on the character of members of the Naval Committee. Without interrogation, Lessler said:

"I desire to state absolutely and unequivocally the statement made here yesterday by the witness Doblin as to any collusion, scheme or any of the substantial details sworn to by him, and I desire to reiterate that the facts as originally sworn to by me are true."

Why He Urged Secrecy.

Lessler said that the statement he first made to the subcommittee was in executive session, and that explained his request in his telegram to Doblin to keep the matter confidential.

Mr. Lessler took the stand at 11 a. m. "I deny as false the statement made by the witness yesterday," he said, "as to any collusive scheme he charges against me."

"Mr. Doblin came into my room shortly after 8 o'clock. I was in bed. I said: 'Phil, I've gotten you into trouble.' 'How's that?' he asked. 'I've told the committee the whole Holland boat story.' 'It is trouble,' he replied. 'I said: 'Keep up your nerve and you have nothing to do but to tell the truth, the whole truth.' 'I told him that at the request of the committee I would not discuss the case with him at all. I gave him a copy of the paper containing what had been published. After that there was no talk of his testimony. It was all relative to his political ruin in New York."

Saw the Speaker.

"I did see the Speaker and told him about the investigation and wanted him to help me avoid notoriety. He said: 'It must go on for the present.' 'I telephoned my secretary to go to the Normandie and bring Doblin before the committee. Doblin appeared before the committee, and I saw him no more until he returned to the committee. 'My testimony was heard on the 23d. I told the committee then that Doblin would come without a subpoena. I telegraphed him to come, and he did come. His testimony was heard, and I went with him to the train."

"We went to New York together. There was little said between us. He asked me about the law in his case, and I told him I would look it up. I never saw him after that until he appeared again in the committee room."

McCullagh and Quigg Contradicted.

"I want to deny also the statement of the witness McCullagh to the effect that I had said that I believed there was only one man on the committee whom I could trust. Also the statement of witness Quigg that I had said that the members of the committee who voted for or against the Holland boat were honest or dishonest."

Mr. Lessler said he had had no reason before yesterday to disbelieve Doblin. "I am totally at a loss to understand his action," he asserted.

"What was your reason for not wanting Doblin's name to go to the press?" Mr. Kitchen asked.

"I did not want to make him a scapegoat in New York," he answered, "and the committee did not then want the matter made public."

Mr. Butler—I do not think it is important as to what statement you made as to other members of the committee. What I want to ask is what you said to Doblin when he came to your room at the Normandie. Was anyone else present at the time?"

A.—What was said to Doblin was not said in the presence of anyone else.

Q.—(By Mr. Rixey)—Had you any cause to believe that Doblin was the character of man he has shown himself to be by his statement yesterday?"

A.—No, sir. Never knew of his wrongdoing before; I never knew of his word being doubted before. I am at a total loss to understand the proposition as it now stands.

Q.—You knew of no reason to account for any change of testimony on the part of Doblin.

A.—I know of no reason.

Annie Jennifer, a negro woman, forty-two years old, died without medical attendance at her home, at 15 Pierce Street northwest, early this morning. Coroner Nevitt was notified and pronounced death due to natural causes.

DEALERS RESENT DEMANDS OF BUYERS

In Accord With Movement to End Commissions.

The chief subject of conversation in market circles today was the publication in The Times yesterday of the resolution adopted by the Retail Butchers' and Meat Dealers' Protective Association, condemning the practice of paying commissions to the purchasers for hotels, restaurants and private families. The acknowledgment on the part of the dealers that such a practice exists and their appeal to the public to assist them in stamping it out was the first explanation of the prevailing high prices in this city for all kinds of provisions.

In charging that the practice forced all dealers to rob the customer to pay the steward, the association but gave expression to a condition which the individual dealer has been helpless to resist. It has simply been a question of competing with other dealers in paying commissions for trade or getting out of the business.

For years considerations have been offered buyers for the large hotels for the trade which they controlled, but it is only within the past few years that "enterprising" dealers have sought out the buyers for even small families and offered them a liberal consideration for any business that they might be able to control. The practice once started, other dealers were compelled to adopt the same course or abandon the trade.

One of the features of the business which has provoked the severest criticism is the hardship it has imposed on those unable to pay the prevailing excessive prices. All sales are based upon a retail price which is general throughout the market. Those who purchase in considerable quantities demand a discount, and it is on this very class of business that the commissions have to be paid. In handling produce, therefore, the dealer has to figure the commission in the cost of doing business and make his prices sufficiently high to cover this commission, and the profit which he is compelled to claim for himself.

From the expressions of opinion around the markets this morning there seems to be little doubt that the dealers may depend upon the public to support them in their efforts to stamp out the abuse.

FIFTY-FOUR LIVES LOST IN LONDON ASYLUM FIRE

Insane Patients Resist Efforts to Save Them and Many Perish Miserably.

LONDON, Jan. 27.—Fire broke out in Colney Hatch, six and one-half miles north of London, at 5:30 o'clock this morning, and lasted until 9:15. At least 54 persons had lost their lives.

The fire destroyed the entire Jewish wing of Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum. The efforts of the firemen were directed to saving and calming the patients, who, naturally, were intensely excited. Five wooden buildings were burned out. Many dead bodies have already been discovered. The exploration of the ruins is still going on.

Six Hundred Sleeping Patients.

The principal building burned was that known as the annex. It was built of iron and wood. There were nearly 600 women asleep at the time. A high wind fanned the flames, which were blown about like billows. The flames quickly spread, and the whole building was soon a roaring furnace. The well of the asylum was out of order and the water supply was very poor.

Altogether five buildings, including the dayrooms, dormitories and doctors' apartments, were burned. The task of removing the patients, who were greatly excited, was one of great difficulty. Scenes of panic ensued at first among the women lunatics, and although the officials did their utmost to secure their safe retreat, many of the inmates rushed wildly around, resisting the attempts that were being made to save them.

Frightful Scenes Witnessed.

One in particular who was known to have a terrible fear of fire—in fact, it was one of the most striking features of her mania—shrieked frantically for many minutes. Several lunatics, however, assisted in carrying out their companions.

Several of the lunatics in the dormitories became panic stricken and made no effort to save themselves.

As soon as it was thought all had been rescued the roll was called and between thirty and fifty failed to answer. It is known, however, that some of the lunatics are still wandering through the grounds.

The cause of the disaster is unknown. Anxious friends of the patients are arriving from all quarters. The officials are endeavoring to complete the list of lost.

The five buildings were each fifty by forty feet. They were built of well-dried, seasoned wood, and had corrugated zinc roof. They were connected with the main building by a long corridor. These buildings were heated by hot water pipes from a stove house at the bottom of the slope, whence the flames leaped with terrible rapidity.

Inmates Driven Out by Force.

When the fire broke out there was a mad rush through the corridors. Several of the inmates were driven to places of safety by sheer force. The intensity of the heat was such that many of the bodies were almost entirely consumed.

Many of the patients roamed through the grounds attired only in their night clothes. It is feared that two of the nurses lost their lives.

There were many heartrending scenes outside the asylum gate when relatives and friends of the inmates came to inquire about the patients.

The buildings which were destroyed accommodated 320 patients.

London Thrilled With Horror.

London is thrilled with horror at the disaster, and every new detail piles up the agony. It seems that nothing was provided for such an emergency. There were no escapes to the buildings and practically no water available, which made the asylum a hopeless death trap.

There were 2,600 inmates in the entire institution, but only 500 occupied the burned section. These were mostly old women, having harmless vagaries and not requiring to be isolated.

DEATH SENTENCE OF COL. LYNCH COMMUTED

Irish Member of Parliament to Endure Penal Servitude for Life.

LONDON, Jan. 27.—The sentence of Col. Arthur Lynch, the Irish member of parliament, condemned last week for high treason, was today commuted to penal servitude for life.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY IN KANSAS LEGISLATURE

TOPEKA, Kan., Jan. 27.—Representative McLaughlin has introduced a resolution in the Kansas house declaring: "That we, the representatives of the people of Kansas, hereby extend our warmest admiration and heartfelt good will to Col. Arthur Lynch, and assure him that, far from regarding him as the traitor the British government brands him, we look upon him as a soldier of liberty and a patriot of the highest order; that the British government dare not hang him." The resolution went over under the rules.

Dr. Munroe Smith of New York delivered a lecture on "Political Science" last night before the fourth-year class of the Georgetown Law School. It was the first in the second series.

AMERICA PEACEMAKER IN ACRE IMBROGLIO

Brazilian and Bolivian Representatives Seek Our Good Offices.

The Brazilian minister and the Bolivian charge d'affaires called at the State Department today and had separate talks with Secretary Hay relative to the dispute of their government over the possession of the territory of Acre. It is more than tacitly admitted that Secretary Hay is endeavoring to play the role of peacemaker between Brazil and Bolivia, but whether he will be successful at present seems doubtful. State Department officials say that both of the South American governments are particularly desirous to have the sympathy of the United States in the Acre dispute, and each hesitates to proceed to the extreme of war without knowing the exact status of the feeling of the United States.

Movements of Ocean Liners.

NEW YORK, Jan. 27.—Arrived: La Champagne, from Havre; Minneapolis, from Southampton; Kroonland, from Antwerp; Bellaura, from Swansea.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT BOUND FOR CANTON

Guest of Honor This Evening at Banquet.

President Roosevelt is on his way to Canton, Ohio, today, where he will be the guest of honor at a banquet to be given by the Canton Republican League, in honor of the birthday of the late President McKinley. The latter's natal day was January 23, but as that is the date of the Supreme Court dinner at the White House, the banquet was fixed for January 27, in order that the President might keep both engagements. The President will respond to the toast, "William McKinley."

The President left Washington at 12:30 o'clock this morning. Secretary Root was the only one of the Cabinet to accompany the President. The others in the party were Secretary Cortelyou and Gen. Leonard Wood, Col. T. A. Bingham and Capt. W. S. Cowles, the President's aides, Surgeon General Rixey, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture James H. Brigham and Representative R. W. Taylor, of the Canton district.

While ascending the steps of the Academy of Music last night Harry Lucas, colored, of 1422 South Carolina Avenue southeast, slipped and fell, injuring his head. He was sent to the Emergency Hospital.

NOT ALARMED FOR UNION STATION BILL

Friends of Measure Expect a Compromise.

Friends of the union station bill profess not to be alarmed by the failure of the House and Senate conferees to come to an agreement in regard to the bill. It is stated that the House Appropriations Committee will meet the compromise offered by the Senate conferees and that the bill will pass in that form.

As passed by the Senate the measure provides that the Baltimore and Ohio and Pennsylvania railroads should receive \$1,500,000 each in consideration of the changes from the present plans to the union station idea on the Massachusetts Avenue site. The House reduced this to \$1,000,000 each.

In conference the Senate representatives offered to split the difference, giving each road \$1,250,000, and \$300,000 additional for the Pennsylvania as part consideration of the estimated value of the land on the Mall which will be surrendered by that company. It is expected hearings will be granted the representatives of railroads in the event of further conferences.

KAISER WILHELM II FORTY-FOUR TODAY

Anniversary to Be Celebrated Here Tonight.

BERLIN, Jan. 27.—The Kaiser is forty-four years old today. This morning his majesty held a birthday reception in the White Hall of the castle, which was attended by members of the royal family and the various diplomats in Berlin.

Among those who congratulated the Kaiser was United States Ambassador Tower, with whom the Emperor had a long, familiar conversation.

The forty-fourth birthday anniversary of Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, will be celebrated in proper form this evening by the staff of the German embassy and number of prominent Germans from the Eastern cities tonight at 8 o'clock. A dinner will be given in honor of the event at the German embassy, to which invitations have been issued by Count Quadt, charge d'affaires.

The anniversary will be observed in most of the larger cities by Germans who will participate in functions honoring the occasion.

Numerous cablegrams were exchanged today between the attaches of the embassy here and the imperial household.

CANAL TREATY DEATH KNEEL FOR EUROPEAN AMBITIONS

VIENNA, Jan. 27.—The "Arbeiter Zeitung" sees in the signing of the United States Panama canal treaty the death knell of the ambitions of England, Germany and all other European powers. The paper adds:

"America will soon be the predominant world power. Europe will smart under the burden of American tyranny. The Kaiser will, perhaps, become the vassal of the American Republic."

CHARLES M. SCHWAB TO HAVE AUDIENCE WITH POPE

ROME, Jan. 27.—Charles M. Schwab, president of the United States Steel Corporation, has requested a private audience with the Pope.

PIOUS FUND ARBITRATION COURT'S COSTS ONLY \$26,000

VIENNA, Jan. 27.—Prof. Lammasch, a member of The Hague Court of Arbitration, denying the report that the costs of the American-Mexican arbitration reached a total of \$400,000, says the whole proceedings, excluding the fees of counsel, amounted to only \$26,000.

CARACAS OUT OF SALT AND FLOUR

PARIS, Jan. 27.—A Caracas dispatch to the "Matin" says the supply of flour and salt has been exhausted. A supply of salt is expected from Puerto Cabello tomorrow.

The former Venezuelan warship Zamora, flying the British flag, has arrived at La Guaira with provisions for the allied squadrons.

WEATHER INDICATIONS.

It is considerably warmer today generally over eastern districts, but colder over the western slope region and the upper Mississippi valley, where zero temperature prevails. It is much warmer in the Rocky Mountain and Plateau regions.

Rain is indicated for tonight and Wednesday in the South Atlantic and Gulf States, Tennessee, and the Ohio Valley, and for Wednesday in Atlantic coast districts. It will be warmer tonight in the eastern portion of the Middle Atlantic States, and somewhat colder in the lake region.

The winds along the Middle Atlantic coast will be fresh west to southwest, becoming easterly Wednesday; on the South Atlantic and east Gulf coasts fresh east to southeast winds will prevail.

TEMPERATURE.

9 a. m.	35
12 m.	36
1 p. m.	34

THE SUN.

Sun sets today	5:16 p. m.
Sun rises tomorrow	7:09 a. m.

TIDE TABLE.

High tide today	7:51 p. m.
Low tide today	1:54 p. m.
High tide tomorrow	8:21 a. m., 8:29 p. m.
Low tide tomorrow	2:24 a. m., 2:34 p. m.